VISIT…

Self-Fulfilling Prophecy?

A short adventure for four 11th-level player characters

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Long ago, a sinister drider imbued a magical rod with his essence and intelligence—and his hatred of the drow. This dangerous item, called *Dark Fate*, was responsible for starting a drow civil war that decimated an entire city in centuries past. With the recent return of a visiting comet, an old, near-forgotten prophecy about the rod has resurfaced. Now both a party of holy adventurers and a drow faction journey to the ruins of the destroyed drow city to get their hands on the rod. But which group has interpreted the prophecy correctly? And what about the driders who now live in the dark elf ruins…?

BACKGROUND

Near the western edge of a large desert sits the large city of Gryth. It has little to recommend it, aside from its role as a trade caravan center and its proximity to an easy entrance to the Underdark.

Centuries ago, a drow settlement lay about three days' journey from Gryth in the Underdark. All that remains of that city now are some abandoned crypts taken over by driders. Travel between Gryth and the crypts is about as dangerous as any other travel in the Underdark. No other settlements lie between the two locations.

Six Hundred Years Ago…

In the Underdark, a drider who called himself "The Forsaken" crafted the rod known as *Dark Fate*, imbuing it with all his hatred of drow. When it was complete, he performed an unholy ritual and sealed himself into the rod, imbuing it with intelligence as well. Before his death, the Forsaken arranged for the rod to be delivered as a gift to a cleric named Alantria, the leader of one of the more powerful drow houses.

The power and ego of the rod overwhelmed Alantria; it utterly controlled her, started a civil war among the drow, and caused countless deaths. In what would be the last battle of the 'Tween Wars, Alantria was slain, and the rod passed into history, likely buried with the fallen champion in her ornate crypt within the war-ravaged drow city.

The Last Few Centuries…

Drow moved away from this area of the Underdark. Driders moved into the abandoned crypts.

Last Month...

A comet known as the Harbinger appeared in the night sky. As many view such celestial events as important signs, the comet's appearance sparked interest in researching its history. Scholars among the surface dwellers and the drow, endeavoring to discern its meaning, unearthed a prophecy written about the time of its last appearance. The prophecy seems to concern the comet's return (see below).

Last Week...

A group known as "the Holy" arrived in Gryth, asked questions about the Underdark, and left the next day. (They didn't tell locals of their mission: to discover the rod called *Dark Fate* on behalf of their church.) Things went poorly for the group, though, as they were attacked by a number of Colossal monstrous spiders and driders. The spiders' poison affected more than one party member, including their guide—a bard named Morning Glory—and the Holy's leader called for a retreat. Unable to carry off all the wounded, one group member took a hair from Morning Glory's dead body and left it, planning to *resurrect* her once they got back to town.

However, the bard was not dead, only dying. The driders stabilized her and went to work transforming her into one of them.

Two Days Ago...

The transformation complete, Morning Glory Blade is now an angry drider, filled with loathing for the mortal world—especially her former friends, the members of the Holy. She plots to find *Dark Fate* on her own and use it to wreak her vengeance.

Yesterday...

The Holy returned to Gryth and sought to *resurrect* their bard, but the spell failed.

Today...

The PCs arrive in Gryth. The drow wizards Alakara and Pharn arrive in the Northern Caverns of the crypts (see Area 3, below) and begin their own search for the magical rod.

PREPARATION

You, the Dungeon Master (DM), need a copy of the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*® to use this adventure. Text that appears in unshaded boxes is important information and special instructions for you, not for players. Monster and NPC statistics are provided with each encounter in abbreviated form or, where appropriate, the proper page in the *Monster Manual* is referenced.

To get started, print out this module (including the map and the prophecy handout, found at the end of this file), and Morning Glory Blade at CR 11. You also may want to print out the drider template, found in the Monster Mayhem section of the D&D website at <http://www.wizards.com/dnd/article.asp?x=dnd/mm/mm20011118a> and the Morning Glory Blade writeup from the Character Closeup section at <http://www.wizards.com/dnd/article.asp?x=dnd/cc/cc20020927a>.

Self-Fulfilling Prophecy? uses a modified version of the Precious Ore map from the Map-a-Week feature on the D&D® website. The original is available for download at <http://www.wizards.com/dnd/images/mapofweek/Precious_Ore_lo.jpg>. The modified map is reprinted in this adventure for your convenience.

The city of Gryth, which features in this module, also appeared in *Desert Sands*, a free adventure available at <http://www.wizards.com/dnd/article1.asp?x=dnd/oa/oa20020223b>.

The Prophecy

when twice times thrice the mighty wheel has turned
and once again the harbinger lights the night
heed all that the world has learned
danger threatens drow seal our plight
the rod of dark fate's close at hand
war and war shall tear the land
by the rod's fierce demand
make all mortals understand

The lack of punctuation in this prophecy is critical to the misunderstandings and misinterpretations that have arisen within the two different factions seeking the rod. This prophecy is reprinted as a player handout on the last page of this adventure.

The Factions

Both interpretations agree that "when twice times thrice the mighty wheel has turned" means 600 years past. That assumption seems further confirmed by the phrase, "and once again the harbinger lights the night"—the Harbinger is a comet last seen in the night sky six centuries ago. Through exacting research, the surface-dwellers and the drow have also determined that "dark fate" refers to a rod wielded in a drow civil war that coincided with the comet's last appearance.

The Good

Church scholars put in many years of painstaking labor to translate this verse from a very delicate, fragmenting scroll written by one of the faithful 600 years ago:

When twice times thrice the mighty wheel has turned,
and once again the Harbinger lights the night.
Heed all that the world has learned.
Danger threatens. Drow seal our plight.
The rod of Dark Fate's *close at hand;*
war and war shall tear the land.
By the rod's fierce demand:
Make all mortals understand.

In this interpretation, drow are the evil force threatening peace, and the rod is a force of goodness that can help surface dwellers understand the impending danger from the Underdark.

Because of this interpretation of the prophecy, a lawful good church (that of Tyr in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting or Heironeous in Greyhawk make good choices) sent a good-aligned party called the Holy on a mission to retrieve the rod. Lord Defender Dagon (LG human Wiz 11) leads the group, which consists of Mecurial (LG human Ftr 7), Calalinda the Wise (LG human Clr 7), Muxx "Mighty Fists" Murge (LG human Mnk 7), and Dlern Praiseworthy (LG human Sor 7). For statistics, see Chapter 2: Characters in the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide* and use the NPC entries.

The Holy had employed Morning Glory Blade (NG elf Brd 9) as a guide and bardic lore advisor. She is detailed in this month's Character Closeup on the D&D website.

The Holy have invested much time and effort into securing the rod, and they'll quickly rebuff any interference in their plans, even from well-meaning, good-aligned PCs.

Using Table 5-3: Initial NPC Attitude in the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*, treat the Holy as indifferent toward the PCs, unless the player characters have indicated they are interested in the rod, in which case the Holy turn hostile.

The group recently returned from the Underdark caverns, where they encountered and killed two Colossal monstrous spiders, but at a very high cost: Several members of the group were poisoned or badly wounded. Morning Glory Blade lay dead (or so they thought) when four driders attacked.

Holy and devoted, they may be, but they're also slow to create or change their plans. It will be several more weeks until they feel prepared to venture into the caverns again.

The Bad

The drow, too, have learned of the prophecy.

When twice times thrice the mighty wheel has turned
and once again the Harbinger lights the night.
Heed all that the world has learned.
Danger threatens drow. Seal our plight.
The rod of Dark Fate's *close at hand.*
War, and war shall tear the land.
By the rod's fierce demand:
Make all mortals understand.

The dark elves Alakara (NE drow elf Wiz 11) and Pharn (NE drow elf Evo 12) consider the prophecy a warning to them: "danger threatens drow." Their interpretation leads them to believe they need the rod; without it, they fear, another civil war might pit drow against drow again. These two want to find the rod to prevent civil war—or at least to help them wind up on the winning side when it's all over.

For statistics, see Chapter 2: Characters in the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide* and use the NPC Wizard entries, adjusted for female drow. See Area 3: Northern Caverns below for their spells.

The Ugly

The driders who inhabit the old crypts are ignorant of the prophecy, except for what Morning Glory Blade has told them. Their motivation is self-preservation and territoriality: They've been exiled from drow communities. Here in the caverns, at least, is a space they can call their own.

Until recently, four driders lived here with two Colossal monstrous spiders. Then the Holy killed the spiders and left behind their hired bard. The driders wasted no time in transforming Morning Glory into one of them. Now five angry driders await the next incursion into their territory.

In the unlikely event of attempted negotiations with the driders, treat them as hostile (see Table 5-3: Initial NPC Attitude in the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*).

INVOLVING THE PCS

You know your player characters best and how to most effectively involve them in this adventure. Here are a few ideas for you to work with:

- A church or wizard's guild found a copy of the prophecy and wants the PCs to investigate.
- If the party has a bard or loremaster, she may have stumbled upon the prophecy.
- A collector of ancient items offers a reward for the retrieval of the rod mentioned in an old poem.
- A scholar researching the 'Tween Wars, drow civil wars that took place 600 years ago, wants to retrieve the rod.
- The PCs, passing through Gryth, hear that a *resurrection* spell has failed.

Depending upon which hook you use to lure the PCs into the adventure, you might share appropriate selections of the information below without making anyone roll a check.

INVESTIGATING

Likely, the PCs start someplace other than Gryth and travel there to get more information.

Anywhere

This list provides information available using Knowledge (history) or bardic lore.

Result	Information Obtained
DC 20	The Harbinger last appeared 600 years ago.
DC 25	A prophecy linked the Harbinger with a powerful rod.
DC 30	The rod, called *Dark Fate*, was wielded by Alantria in a drow civil war 600 years ago known as the 'Tween Wars. It has not been seen since.
DC 30	Alantria is buried in drow crypts not far from the surface city of Gryth.

Gryth

This list provides general information that the PCs can glean from using general Gather Information efforts in Gryth.

Result	Information Obtained
DC 5	There's an entrance to the Underdark nearby.
DC 10	The PCs learn the exact location of the entrance to the Underdark.
DC 10	A group on pilgrimage from the church of Heironeous (or Tyr) came through here about a week ago, asking about the history of drow in the area.
DC 10	Drow seem almost perpetually feuding among themselves, house against house. The multitudes of small disputes rarely amount to much.
DC 10	Yesterday, the local church tried to *resurrect* someone, but the spell failed.
DC 15	The pilgrims tried to have their dead bard *resurrected* yesterday, but the spell failed.
DC 15	The PCs receive directions to old drow crypts, three days' journey away. A long time ago, drow converted this area of the Underdark into a complex of tombs and crypts.
DC 15	The last major drow civil war in this area was about 600 years ago. It had a tremendously high death count, which is why there aren't many drow in the area anymore.
DC 18	Driders inhabit the old drow crypts now.
DC 20	A fierce cleric named Alantria led an uprising during the last drow civil war.
DC 25	Alantria wielded a fancy rod or mace with many magical powers.
DC 25	The rod went by many names, including *Dark Fate*.
DC 28	Powers attributed to the rod make it sound like a *rod of lordly might*.
DC 30	The rod is intelligent and has more powers than a standard *rod of lordly might*.
DC 35	A scrap of what's believed to be one of the earliest copies of the prophecy had "Dark Fate by the hand of Alantria" written on the back.

Divination

If the PCs use a *divination* spell to ask about finding the rod, you might use the following rhyme:

You seek it and it wants to be found.
It lies in a tomb deep underground.
Ignorant guards of legs eight
Shield the world from darker fate.

Knowledge (Arcana)

If the PCs are from the Underdark near here or specifically inquire about magic and spellcasting in the Underdark, they may learn about *faerzress*.

Result	Information Obtained
DC 15	The Underdark nearby affects some types of spells strangely.
DC 20	Teleportation and divination magic sometimes doesn't function, or it malfunctions.
DC 25	The character knows the gist of the "*Faerzress* and the Underdark" sidebar.

ABANDONED CRYPTS

After the 'Tween Wars ravaged this area, depleting the population, survivors moved to safer or more glamorous locations like Szith Morcane or Menzoberranzen. The area shown on the map on the next page then became part of a fashionable section of drow burial plots.

Alternatively occupied and emptied by passing creatures, the caverns didn't have steady residents until about 100 years ago, when a group of driders exiled from drow communities settled here. At its peak it held about 40 driders, but over time the population declined. Until last week, only four driders and their two Colossal monstrous spider pets occupied the entire cavern complex. After the Holy attacked, the driders retreated into the more defensible southernmost caverns (see Area 4).

Yesterday, after several failed attempts to penetrate the *faerzress* (see sidebar) using teleportation magic, the drow wizards seeking the rod tunneled into the northern section of caves (Area 3) and began to search through the crypts.

Area 1: Entrance

Descending through a 30-foot shaft offers entry to this set of caverns.

Area 2: Dead, But Not Forgotten (EL 11)

After the Holy came and slaughtered the driders' two Colossal monstrous spider pets, one of the drider clerics used two scrolls of *animate dead* with high caster levels to bring them back as undead guardians. The Colossal skeleton spiders lurk in the shadows of two side nooks in this large cavern.

Colossal Spider Skeleton (2): CR 9; Colossal undead; HD 32d12; hp 220, 200; Init +5; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 13, touch 3, flat-footed 12; Atk +15 melee (4d6+12, bite); Face/Reach 40 ft. by 40 ft./15 ft.; SQ Undead traits; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +11, Will +18; Str 26, Dex 12, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Climb +16, Hide –15; Improved Initiative.

Undead Traits: A Colossal spider skeleton is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death, effects, necromantic effects, mind-influencing effects, and any effect requiring a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects. It is not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, or energy drain. A Colossal spider skeleton cannot heal damage, but negative energy heals it. The creature is not at risk of death from massive damage, but it is destroyed at 0 hit points or less. A Colossal spider skeleton has darkvision (60-foot range). It cannot be raised, and resurrection works only if it is willing.

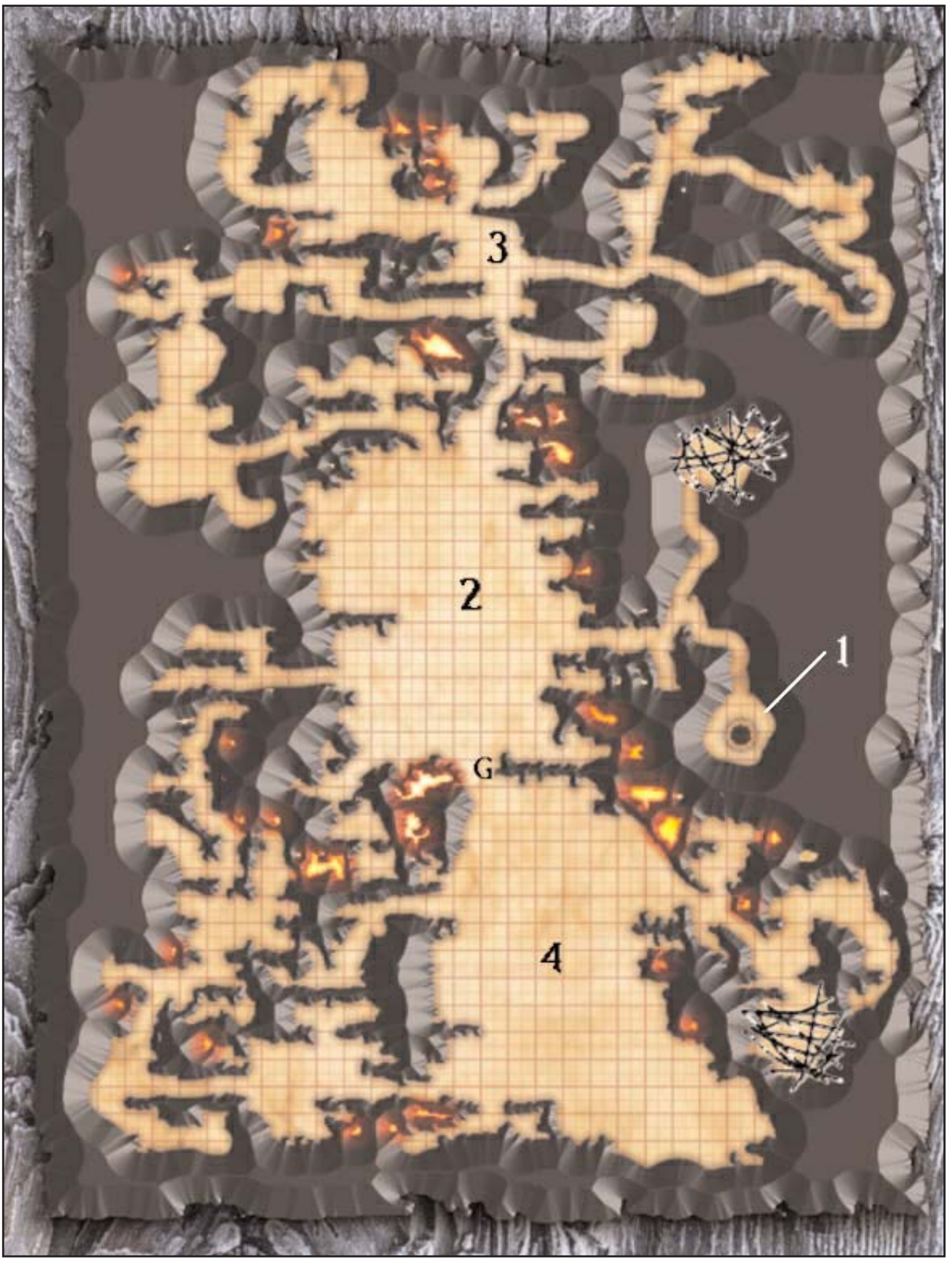
Faerzress and the Underdark

The Underdark of Faerûn is suffused with a magical radiation the drow call *faerzress*. A remnant of the mighty forces that shaped the terrain of the Underdark, *faerzress* distorts and interferes with certain types of magic. This effect is also found in areas of the Underdark of Greyhawk and several other worlds. In the context of the underground portion of this adventure, *faerzress* has the following effects:

- Scry checks made for scrying on a target located within the Underdark (as opposed to checks made to detect magical sensors) suffer a –4 penalty because of the interference of *faerzress* on divination magic.
- Transmutation (teleportation) spells and effects such as *teleport, word of recall, refuge,* and even *teleport without error* do not work reliably over distances of more than one mile when either the origin or the destination is within the Underdark. A character who casts a *teleport* spell or uses an ability that duplicates the spell must make a Spellcraft check (DC 35). If the check succeeds, the spell works properly. If it fails, the teleporting character automatically suffers a mishap, just as if he had rolled 100 on the table in the *teleport* spell description, followed by an "off-target" result.

  A character using a normally infallible form of teleportation magic (such as *word of recall* or *teleport without error*) must make a Spellcraft check (DC 25). If the check succeeds, the spell works properly. If it fails, the character suffers a mishap and an off-target result as described above.

The effects of *faerzress* on spells is not widely known among surface-dwelling characters. Before a character attempts a spell that would be affected by the Underdark's magical conditions, allow the caster a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 25) to determine whether the character happens to know of hazards the player may not be aware of.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Area 3: Northern Caverns (EL 14)

Alakara and Pharn arrived in the caverns a few days ago. Aware of the threat of the undead spiders to the south, they decided to carefully search this area first and hope to avoid confronting the spiders or the driders beyond.

It will take them three days to migrate from this area south into the drider lair (Area 4).

Alakara: Female drow Wiz 11; CR 11; Medium-size humanoid (elf); HD 11d4+3; hp 30; Init +7; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14; Atk +5 melee (1d6, quarterstaff), or +10 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow with masterwork bolts); SA Spell-like abilities; SQ Drow traits, SR 22; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +9; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 19, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +18, Concentration +14, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +12, Listen +3, Scry +18, Search +6, Spellcraft +18, Spot +3; Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Toughness.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day—*dancing lights, darkness, faerie fire*. Caster level 11th; save DC 10 + spell level.

Drow Traits: Alakara is immune to magic *sleep* spells and effects. She has a +2 racial bonus on saves against enchantment spells or effects and a +2 racial bonus on Will saves against spells or spell-like abilities. She also has darkvision (120-foot range) and is entitled to a Search check when within 5 feet of a secret or concealed door as though actively looking for it. As a drow, Alakara has light blindness (blinded for 1 round by abrupt exposure to bright light, –1 circumstance penalty on all attack rolls, saves, and checks while operating in bright light). She also has a +2 racial bonus on Listen, Spot, and Search checks (already figured into the statistics given above).

Spells Prepared (4/5/5/5/4/2/1; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—*detect magic* (2), *read magic* (2); 1st—*detect secret doors, expeditious retreat, identify, shield, spider climb*; 2nd—*blur, cat's grace, knock, rope trick, see invisibility*; 3rd—*dispel magic, fireball, fly, haste, magic circle against good*; 4th—*confusion, improved invisibility, stoneskin, summon monster IV*; 5th—*hold monster, summon monster V*; 6th—*greater dispelling*.

Spellbook: 0—*arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, flare, ghost sound, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*alarm, detect secret doors, enlarge, expeditious retreat, identify, magic missile, obscuring mist, reduce, shield, spider climb, summon monster I, Tenser's floating disk*; 2nd—*blur, bull's strength, cat's grace, invisibility, knock, rope trick, see invisibility, summon monster II, web*; 3rd—*blink, clairaudience/clairvoyance, dispel magic, fireball, fly, gaseous form, haste, magic circle against good, slow, summon monster III*; 4th—*confusion, dimensional anchor, fear, improved invisibility, stoneskin, summon monster IV*; 5th—*contact other plane, dismissal, hold monster, summon monster V, teleport, wall of stone*; 6th—*greater dispelling, true seeing*.

Possessions: quarterstaff, masterwork light crossbow, 10 masterwork bolts, *cloak of resistance +1, ring of protection +1, bracers of armor +2, amulet of natural armor +1, wand of fireball* (9th-level caster), scroll of *teleport*, scroll of *cloudkill*, *potion of detect thoughts*, dagger.

Pharn: Female drow Evo 12; CR 12; Medium-size humanoid (elf); HD 12d4+3; hp 33; Init +7; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Atk +6/+1 melee (1d6, quarterstaff), or +11 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow with masterwork crossbow bolts); SA Spell-like abilities; SQ Drow traits, SR 23; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +10, Will +10; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 22, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +21, Concentration +15, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (the planes) +16, Listen +3, Scry +21, Search +8, Spellcraft +21, Spot +3; Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Heighten Spell, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Toughness.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day—*dancing lights, darkness, faerie fire*. Caster level 12th; save DC 10 + spell level.

Drow Traits: Pharn is immune to magic *sleep* spells and effects. She has a +2 racial bonus on saves against enchantment spells or effects and a +2 racial bonus on Will saves against spells or spell-like abilities. She also has darkvision (120-foot range) and is entitled to a Search check when within 5 feet of a secret or concealed door as though actively looking for it. As a drow, Pharn has light blindness (blinded for 1 round by abrupt exposure to bright light, –1 circumstance penalty on all attack rolls, saves, and checks while operating in bright light). She also has a +2 racial bonus on

Listen, Spot, and Search checks (already figured into the statistics given above).

Spells Prepared (5/7/7/6/5/5/4; save DC 16 + spell level): 0—*arcane mark, detect magic, disrupt undead, flare, light*; 1st—*endure elements, feather fall, magic missile* (2), *protection from chaos, protection from good, shield*; 2nd—*darkness, detect thoughts, endurance* (2), *flaming sphere, minor image, see invisibility*; 3rd—*blink, fly, gaseous form, greater magic weapon, haste, lightning bolt*; 4th—*charm monster, ice storm, phantasmal killer, wall of fire, wall of ice*; 5th—*hold monster, teleport, transmute mud to rock, transmute rock to mud, wall of force*; 6th—*chain lightning* (2), *legend lore, true seeing.*

Spellbook: 0—*arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, flare, ghost sound, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*endure elements, feather fall, magic missile, protection from chaos, protection from good, reduce, shield, shield, spider climb, summon monster I, Tenser's floating disk*; 2nd—*darkness, daylight, detect thoughts, endurance, flaming sphere, minor image, see invisibility, shatter*; 3rd—*blink, fireball, fly, gaseous form, greater magic weapon, haste, Leomund's tiny hut, lightning bolt, wind wall*; 4th—*charm monster, fire shield, ice storm, Otiluke's resilient sphere, phantasmal killer, shout, wall of fire, wall of ice*; 5th—*Bigby's interposing hand, cone of cold, hold monster, teleport, transmute mud to rock, transmute rock to mud, wall of force*; 6th—*Bigby's forceful hand, chain lightning, legend lore, true seeing.*

Possessions: quarterstaff, masterwork light crossbow, 10 masterwork bolts, *cloak of resistance +1, ring of protection +1, bracers of armor +3, amulet of natural armor +1, wand of lightning bolt* (9th-level caster), *headband of intellect +2*, scroll of *teleport*, scroll of *acid fog*, *potion of detect thoughts*, dagger.

Area 4: Drider Lair (EL 11)

The entrance to this area is guarded by a *glyph of warding.*

Glyph of Warding: CR 4; spell, spell trigger, no reset; spell effect (*glyph of warding* [blast], 5-foot radius, 3d8 sonic, Reflex save [DC 16] halves damage); Search (DC 28); Disable Device (DC 28).

After her transformation into a drider just days ago, Morning Glory Blade fought and connived her way into leading the other four driders. Two of them had no spellcasting skills, but the other two were clerics before their transformation. They work very well as a group, complementing each other's skills.

Morning Glory Blade: Female drider* Brd 9; CR 11; Large aberration; HD 9d6+36; hp 31; Init +4; Spd 30 ft., climb 15 ft.; AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16; Atk +8 melee (1d4+4 plus poison, bite), or +9/+4 melee (1d8+4/19–20, *+1 longsword*) and +3 melee (1d4+1, bite), or +11/+6 ranged (1d8+3/x3, masterwork mighty composite longbow [+3 Str bonus] with masterwork arrows); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison, spell-like abilities; SQ Bardic knowledge +9, bardic music (countersong, *fascinate*, inspire competence, inspire courage, inspire greatness, *suggestion*) 9/day, elf traits, SR 20; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +10, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 21.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Diplomacy +17, Hide +4, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +12, Listen +2, Move Silently +8, Perform (singing, dancing, lute, panpipes, lyre, drum, drama, mime, juggling) +17, Search +2, Spot +2; Dodge, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Spring Attack.

Poison (Ex): Morning Glory Blade delivers her poison (Fort DC 14) via each successful bite attack. The initial damage and secondary damage are the same (1d6 points of Strength damage).

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day—*dancing lights, darkness, detect chaos, detect evil, detect good, detect law, detect magic, faerie fire, levitate.* Caster level 1st; save DC 15 + spell level.

Bardic Knowledge: Morning Glory Blade may make a bardic knowledge check with a bonus of +9 to see whether she knows some relevant information about local notable people, legendary items, or noteworthy places.

Bardic Music: Blade can use her song or poetics to produce magical effects on those around her.

Countersong (*Su*): Morning Glory Blade can counter magical effects that depend on sound by making a Perform check for each round of countersong. Any creature within 30 feet of her that is affected by a sonic or language-dependent magical attack may use Morning Glory Blade's Perform check result in place of his or her saving throw if desired. Countersong lasts for 10 rounds.

Fascinate (*Su*): Morning Glory Blade can cause a single creature within 90 feet that can see and hear her to become fascinated with her. Morning Glory Blade's Perform check result is the DC for the opponent's Will save. Any obvious threat breaks the effect. Fascination lasts 9 rounds.

Inspire Competence (*Su*): An ally within 30 feet who can see and hear Morning Glory Blade gets a +2 competence bonus on skill checks with a particular skill for as long as he or she can hear the music.

Inspire Courage (*Su*): Allies who can hear Morning Glory Blade receive a +2 morale bonus to saves against charm and fear effects and a +1 morale bonus to attack and weapon damage rolls. The effect lasts for 5 rounds after the ally can no longer hear her.

Inspire Greatness (*Su*): After hearing Morning Glory Blade sing for a full round, a creature within 30 feet gains +2 Hit Dice (d10s that grant temporary hit points), a +2 competence bonus on attacks, and a +1 competence bonus on Fortitude saves. The effect lasts until 5 rounds after the creature can no longer hear her.

Suggestion (*Sp*): Morning Glory Blade can make a suggestion (as the spell) to a creature she has already fascinated. A Will save (DC 18) negates the effect.

Elf Traits: Morning Glory Blade is immune to magic *sleep* spells and effects. She has a +2 racial bonus on saves against enchantment spells or effects. She also has low-light vision (can see twice as far as a human in low-light conditions) and is entitled to a Search check when within 5 feet of a secret or concealed door as though actively looking for it. As an elf, she has Martial Weapon Proficiency (composite longbow, composite shortbow, longbow, longsword, and rapier) as bonus feats. Morning Glory Blade also has a +2 racial bonus on Listen, Spot, and Search checks (already figured into the statistics given above).

Bard Spells Known (3/5/4/3; save DC 15 + spell level): 0—*detect magic, flare, ghost sound, open/close, read magic, resistance;* 1st—*charm person, cure light wounds, identify, mage armor;* 2nd—*blur, silence, sound burst, tongues;* 3rd—*confusion, dispel magic, keen edge.*

Possessions: *ring of protection +1, +1 longsword,* masterwork mighty composite longbow (+3 Str bonus), 25 masterwork arrows, *cloak of Charisma +2, necklace of fireballs* (Type VII), *Heward's handy haversack, potion of jump, potion of spider climb, potion of invisibility,* acid (flask) (2), alchemist's fire (2), antitoxin (vial) (2), holy water (flask) (2), smokestick (2), sunrod (2), tanglefoot bag (2), thunderstone (2), tindertwigs (2), 100 gp pearls (2).

* Uses the "Monster Mayhem" drider template from the **D&D** website.

Tactics: Since her transformation, Morning Glory Blade has come to hate her former associates and will focus her attacks on members of the Holy, starting with a bead from her *necklace of fireballs.* If her former allies are not present, she will combine both offense and defense. With time to prepare, she casts *mage armor, blur,* and *keen edge* on herself. In the first round of combat she starts singing to inspire courage in the other driders. In round two she casts *confusion*. In round three she casts *sound burst.*

Driders (2): CR 7; Large aberration; HD 6d8+18; hp 45; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., climb 15 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Atk +4 melee (1d6+3/19–20, *+1 short sword*) and +4 melee (1d6+2/19–20, *+1 short sword*) and +0 melee (1d4+1, bite); Face/Reach 10 ft. x 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison, spell-like abilities; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Climb +14, Concentration +10, Hide +8, Listen +9, Move Silently +7, Spellcraft +10, Spot +9; Ambidexterity, Combat Casting, Two-Weapon Fighting.

Poison (Ex): A drider delivers its poison (Fort DC 16) with each successful bite attack. The initial and secondary damage are the same (1d6 points of Strength damage).

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day—*dancing lights, darkness, detect chaos, detect evil, detect good, detect law, detect magic, faerie fire, levitate.* Caster level 6th; save DC 13 + spell level.

Possessions: Each drider wields two *+1 short swords.*

Tactics: These driders will fire their bows or wade into melee, as appropriate. They usually rely on their fellows for spell-like abilities and supporting spells.

First Drider Cleric: CR 7; Large aberration; HD 6d8+18; hp 40; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., climb 15 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Atk +4 melee (1d6+3/19–20, *+1 short sword*) and +4 melee (1d6+2/19–20, *+1 short sword*) and +0 melee (1d4+1, bite); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison, spell-like abilities; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Climb +14, Concentration +10, Hide +8, Listen +9, Move Silently +7, Spellcraft +10, Spot +9; Ambidexterity, Combat Casting, Two-Weapon Fighting.

Poison (Ex): The first drider cleric delivers its poison (Fort DC 16) with each successful bite attack. The initial and secondary damage are the same (1d6 points of Strength damage).

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day—*clairaudience/clairvoyance, dancing lights, darkness, detect chaos, detect evil, detect good, detect law, detect magic, discern lies, dispel magic, faerie fire, levitate, suggestion*. Caster level 6th; save DC 13 + spell level.

Spells Prepared (5/5/5/4; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*create water, cure minor wounds* (3), *detect magic*; 1st—*bless, cure light wounds, protection from good*, sanctuary, summon monster I*; 2nd—*bull's strength, cure moderate wounds, endurance, invisibility*, silence*; 3rd—*animate dead, create food and water, dispel magic, magic circle against good**.

*Domain spell. Deity: Lolth. Domains: Evil (cast evil spells at +1 caster level), Trickery (Bluff, Disguise, and Hide are class skills).

Possessions: two *+1 short swords, wand of cure critical wounds* (10 charges), 5 pieces of onyx each worth 50 gp.

Tactics: This drider primarily acts as a support for the others. If given time to prepare, it will cast *protection from good* on itself and *bull's strength*, *endurance*, and *magic circle against good* on one of the standard driders and *darkness* in the area. In the first round of combat, the drider casts *invisibility*. In subsequent rounds it provides boosting spells such as *bull's strength* to other driders, uses spell-like abilities such as *darkness* to good effect, and casts curing spells as needed. If aware that an enemy can see invisible creatures, this drider casts *sanctuary* to help avoid being attacked. It joins melee only as a last resort. *Note:* This drider can cast all listed spells and use all spell-like abilities except *suggestion* without negating either *invisibility* or *sanctuary*.

Second Drider Cleric: CR 7; Large aberration; HD 6d8+18; hp 50; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., climb 15 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Atk +4 melee (1d6+3/19–20, *+1 short sword*) and +4 melee (1d6+2/19–20, *+1 short sword*) and +0 melee (1d4+1, bite); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison, spell-like abilities; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Climb +14, Concentration +10, Hide +8, Listen +9, Move Silently +7, Spellcraft +10, Spot +9; Ambidexterity, Combat Casting, Two-Weapon Fighting.

Poison (Ex): The second drider cleric delivers its poison (Fort DC 16) with each successful bite attack. The initial and secondary damage are the same (1d6 points of Strength damage).

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day—*clairaudience/clairvoyance, dancing lights, darkness, detect chaos, detect evil, detect good, detect law, detect magic, discern lies, dispel magic, faerie fire, levitate, suggestion*. Caster level 6th; save DC 13 + spell level.

Spells Prepared (5/5/5/4; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*create water, cure minor wounds, detect magic, mending, resistance*; 1st—*command, divine favor, inflict light wounds*, magic weapon, random action*; 2nd—*endurance, hold person, shatter*, sound burst, spiritual weapon*; 3rd—*blindness/deafness, contagion*, cure serious wounds, searing light*.

*Domain spell. Deity: Lolth. Domains: Destruction (smite 1/day), Evil (cast evil spells at +1 caster level).

Possessions: two *+1 short swords, necklace of prayer beads* (*karma*).

Tactics: This drider usually casts a couple boosting spells on itself and then joins in the melee. If given time to prepare, it casts *endurance, divine favor,* and *magic weapon* on itself . Otherwise, it takes two rounds to prepare, then attacks. On the first round of combat it casts *endurance*. On round two it casts *contagion* and attacks. If opponents are out of easy melee range, the drider casts *hold person, random action*, and other ranged spells as appropriate.

From having raided the more easily opened tombs in this area, the drivers have accumulated quite a hoard of miscellaneous items in addition to the useful ones they carry and use. Although there's quite a pile of various weapons and armor, they are all so rusted and time-worn as to be valueless.

Treasure: *Horseshoes of speed; potions of love, oil of timelessness,* and *speak with animals;* scrolls of *fly, haste,* and *magic missile* (5th-level caster); *Quaal's feather token*

(*fan*); masterwork dagger and masterwork mighty (+1 Str bonus) composite longbow; 24 pp, 253 gp, 2431 sp, and 5,321 cp.

CONCLUSION

It will take several weeks to search all the tombs in this set of caverns. However, knowing that they're looking for Alantria's crypt can dramatically cut down the time the PCs need. For each day that passes, have every person who spent the day searching make a Search check (DC 25) to locate the appropriate tomb.

Choose one of three possible outcomes:

- **Found!** The player characters find the tomb, and the rod is there. See below for a full description of *Dark Fate*. Note the item's ego—it's likely to control many characters. The rod wants to start another drow war to kill as many as possible.
- **Found?** The PCs locate the tomb with a rod inside; however, the rod is merely a nonmagical copy of *Dark Fate*. While worth 20,000 gp, it is far from the real thing.
- **Empty!** The PCs locate the tomb, but all it contains is an inscription stating that Alantria fell nobly on the field of battle, but her body was never recovered.

Note that it takes the drow, Alakara and Pharn, three days to make their way to Area 4 from the Northern Caverns (Area 3). If they arrive before the PCs, they must also attempt the Search check (DC 25) once per day to locate the appropriate tomb.

DARK FATE

The Background section at the beginning of this adventure describes the rod's origin. Now, 600 years later, it still hungers to kill drow.

This intelligent rod functions as a *rod of lordly might* with several additional properties. Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 20; AL NE; Languages: Common, Elven, Undercommon; wielder has free use of Blind-Fight; wielder has free use of Combat Reflexes; negates racial traits of light blindness, light sensitivity, or sunlight vulnerability for wielder; *daylight* 3/day; Special Purpose: slay drow. If used as a +2 *light mace*, the rod is also bane against elves.

Caster Level: 19th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Rod, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *bull's strength, daylight, fear, flame blade, hold person, inflict light wounds, summon monster I;* creator must be nongood; *Market Price:* 175,000 gp.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

If the true rod has been found, it might well control a player character and send the group on a mission to start a war among the drow. Alternatively, the characters may want to go on a quest to destroy the rod.

If the rod is missing, the adventure's far from over. The characters might have to research the last battle of the drow civil war to learn where the unidentified bodies were buried. Alternatively, the rod might have fallen into the hands of a powerful foe, perhaps a vampire. (The item's negation of sunlight vulnerability makes this a prime choice.)

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Gwendolyn F. M. Kestrel is an editor for Wizards of the Coast's Roleplaying Games R&D department. Recent credits include editing *Faiths and Pantheons*, *Oriental Adventures*, and *Magic of Faerûn*, and designing part of the *Book of Challenges*. She's a frequent contributor to the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS website. Also, check out the website she created for her husband, game designer Andy Collins, at <www.andycollins.net>.

when twice times thrice the mighty wheel has turned
and once again the harbinger lights the night
heed all that the world has learned
danger threatens drow seal our plight
the rod of dark fate's close at hand
war and war shall tear the land
by the rod's fierce demand
make all mortals understand